

26 May 2025

Notice of Motion No. 182

Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at Council Meeting on 26th May 2025:

That Council resolve to:

1. Write to Ms Jaclyn Symes, Treasurer, The Hon. Danny Pearson, Minister for Finance, The Hon. Vicki Ward, Minister for Emergency Services; The Premier, The Hon. Jacinta Allan, local members of the House of Representatives Jackson Taylor MP and The Hon. Kim Wells MP, and Legislative Council members for the North-Eastern and south Eastern Metropolitan Region The Hon. Shaun Leane MLC, Ms Sonja Terpstra MLC, Mr Richard Welch MLC, Mr Nick McGowan MLC, Mr Aiv Puglielli MLC, Mr Lee Tarlamis MLC, Mrs Ann-Marie Hermans MLC, Mr Michael Galea MLC, Ms Rachel Payne MLC, Mr David Limbrick MLC and all crossbench members of the Parliament of Victoria Legislative Council who are not part of the government or opposition in relation to the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund (ESVF):
 - a. Calling on the State Government to fully commit to funding both the initial implementation and ongoing operational costs associated with the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund (ESVF), including the continued delivery of this levy collection service that Knox Council is required to undertake on behalf of the State.
 - b. Advocating that Knox ratepayers should not bear the financial burden of implementing or administering this new levy.
 - c. Advocating the need for sufficient resourcing to implement and manage the revised levy, as insufficient funding may compromise the delivery of essential local services. These additional costs should not be passed onto Knox ratepayers.
 - d. Advocating for the State Government to commit to and provide full funding for both the setup of the ESVF and the continued administration of this levy collection.
 - e. Noting that:
 - i. Knox has estimated the additional implementation cost for 2025/26 to be approximately \$196,000.
 - ii. the changes required from 1 July 2026 will involve system modifications and unknown ongoing costs, which are expected to exceed the 2025/26 figure. These costs will only become clear once more detail is provided regarding principal place of residence requirements.
 - iii. under rate capping, which limits annual rate increases, Council is already under fiscal pressure.

2. Write to the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Chief Executive Officer, Kelly Grigsby, in support of the following resolution passed at the MAV State Council Meeting on 16 May 2025 regarding the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund (ESVF), and requesting the MAV's strong advocacy on this matter:

The MAV expresses the local government sector's disappointment with State Government's approach to levy collection and implementation of the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) and opposes Local Government being a collector on behalf of State Government, and calls on the Victorian Government that if Local Government is to administer the funding then:

1. Adequate administration funding for local Government to manage the cost of administering the ESVF

2. Victorian Government to undertake the community engagement directly with communities

3. Transferring Levy Collection to the State

- a. *Transfer the responsibility of collecting the Principal Place of Residence (PPR) component to the State Revenue Office, ensuring streamlined and efficient collection while leveraging existing state resources.*

4. Ensuring an Equitable Funding Model

- a. *Continue efforts to reduce the levy burden on all Victorian residents, ensuring the model remains equitable for all communities, especially rural areas and primary producers, reflecting the adjustments made to the Primary Production Land (PPL) rate.*

5. Improve Transparency and Communication:

- a. *Implement a comprehensive communication strategy to clarify the levy's purpose, allocation, and impact on ratepayers.*
- b. *Provide a publicly available statement detailing the reasons for changes to the fire services levy, including justifications for any fee increases from 1 July 2025.*

6. Conduct an Ongoing Economic Impact Assessment:

- a. *Undertake periodic economic impact assessments to evaluate how levy changes, including adjustments to the PPR and the primary producer rebate, affect residents, businesses, and the broader community.*
- b. *Release findings publicly to ensure ongoing transparency and facilitate informed decision-making for future policy revisions.*

7. Ensure Equitable Fund Distribution:

- a. *Deliver a needs-based equalization approach for the distribution of ESVF funds, ensuring that rural and regional emergency services, which are disproportionately impacted by natural disasters, receive adequate and timely funding*

3. Through appropriate and effective communication channel(s), inform the community of Council's position on the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund, as detailed in this motion.

Cr Robert Williams
Dinsdale Ward

